Uncertainty and Uncertainty Management: the Metacognitive State of Problem-Solving of Professional (experienced) Translators and Students of Translation Studies

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Abstract
Uncertainty is a cognitive state of indecision that may be indicated by a distinct class of behaviors in the process of translation (Angelone and Shreve, 2011). Uncertainty is related to the problem solving of a translator during the translation activity. This explanatory study attempted to investigate differences in Uncertainty and Uncertainty Management (UCM) between one professional translator—a person who has at least ten years of experience in translation activity—and non-professional translators by using two methodologies; screen recording and Think aloud protocols in retrospect. This study marked the substantial differences in encountering and managing uncertainty among different groups of participants: BA Graduated translation studies students of University of Isfahan, MA Graduated Translation studies students of University of Isfahan, and a member of English department of University of Isfahan who has more than 14 years of experience in translating and teaching translation. This study by analyzing interruptions as signs of uncertainty, manifesting in the process of translation activity in pause, cursor movement, clicking, deleting, adding, dictionary looks-up and so on, found that students are more uncertain at word level and at comprehension, transfer level of uncertainty behavior whereas a professional translator is more or less uncertain at text, context level and at production level of uncertainty behavior. A professional translator manages uncertainties at the first and last stages of uncertainty management whereas student translators postpone uncertainty management to the last stages. This paper is one of the first studies concerning metacognitive activity which may be useful in training novice translators.

Keywords: Uncertainty, Uncertainty Management, Decision making, Screen recording, Interruption